



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

ORGANIZERS OF BANK ROBBERY CONSPIRACY EACH SENTENCED TO DECADES IN PRISON

PHOENIX – Derrick McCreary, 34, of Chandler, Ariz., was sentenced to 38.5 years in prison and John Freeman Hunter, 34, of Los Angeles, Calif. was sentenced to 42 years in prison by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone. Both defendants had been found guilty here by a federal jury on June 22, 2005 of one count of conspiracy, two counts of armed bank robbery and two counts of using, carrying, and brandishing a firearm in commission of a crime of violence. The arrests and guilty verdict were the result of an investigation conducted by the FBI and the Chandler, Mesa, and Tempe Police Departments as well as agencies in California.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated that "The lengthy sentences these defendants received should send a powerful message to would-be bank robbers that the punishment for these violent acts is substantial."

Jana Monroe, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Phoenix stated that, "This investigation is an excellent example of the necessity of cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement. Subjects convicted in this case were members of an organized group traveling from California into the Phoenix metropolitan area for the purpose of committing bank robberies. Members of this group were identified and arrested as a result of investigative work by the FBI, Tempe Police Department, Mesa Police Department, Chandler Police Department, Riverside, California Sheriff's Office, and the California Highway Patrol."

Hunter and McCreary organized the armed robbery of the Tempe Schools Federal Credit Union on January 22, 2002 and the Safeway Federal Credit Union on February 28, 2002. Hunter recruited men in the Los Angeles area to travel to Tempe, Ariz. to participate in the robberies and McCreary chose the credit unions for the robberies. Once in Tempe, the recruited men were given assignments and direction by Hunter and McCreary. Hunter and McCreary also provided the men with a gun, clothes and a stolen car to use during the robberies.

During both of the robberies three of the recruited men entered the bank while the one with the gun ordered everyone to the ground. The robbers then leaped the teller counter toward the vault. They ordered a teller or bank manager to open the vault and pointed the gun at the tellers in the process. During the robbery of the Tempe Schools Federal Credit Union, the robbers stole over \$180,000 in federally insured funds. During the Safeway Federal Credit Union robbery they stole over \$106,000 in federally insured funds. After each of the robberies the three men fled in the stolen vehicle to a location a few blocks away. They ditched the car and got into another getaway car. The four men then went back to McCreary's apartment where Hunter and McCreary divided the stolen money.

The sentencing took place on Monday, December 6, 2005. The prosecution was handled by Charles F. Hyder and Kimberly M. Hare, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

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